

CHRIST In The Psalms

by

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*All things must be fulfilled, which were written . . .
in the Psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:44)*

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The Forty-First Psalm

"He that eateth bread with me lifted up his heel against me" (John 13:18).

Psalms 41

1. **Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.**
2. **The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.**
3. **The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.**
4. **I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.**
5. **Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?**
6. **And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.**
7. **All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.**
8. **An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.**
9. **Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.**
10. **But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.**
11. **By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.**
12. **And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.**
13. **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.**

That the forty-first Psalm is Messianic is beyond all doubt, for the Messiah Himself laid claim to

it in the 13th chapter of John, where in verse 18, He said, **"I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me"** (John 13:18). This is a direct quotation from the 9th verse of Psalm 41, and it gives us a key to the interpretation of the Psalm, without which key we should be helpless indeed to know the full meaning of it.

"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

Was the LORD JESUS ever sick? That our LORD during the days of His flesh ever experienced bodily sickness is a thought that perhaps has occurred to few of His people. This Psalm, however, seems to prove beyond a doubt that He knew what it was to be sick, and so sick that His enemies expected Him to die and rejoiced in the anticipation.

The New Testament teaches us that the Son of GOD became the Son of Man that He might save men:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:14-18).

The word "tempted" can be understood in the sense of a "testing."

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

He could not be tested by indwelling sin, because there was no sin in Him, but apart from that He was tested in all points like as we are.

Well, then, He must have been tested by sickness. Sickness is not sin. Although it is often the result of sin in itself, it is not a sinful thing to be sick. And, since our LORD was tested in all points like as we are, apart from sin, it therefore follows that He must have been tested by sickness.

[BBB *** This study upholds the impeccability of CHRIST, i.e., that He was incapable of sin - while suggesting that He was indeed human, in the fullest sense of the thought. I must admit that I have not considered his argument prior to this - and I leave it to the reader to judge his credibility on this point, that JESUS may have been physically sick ***]

Let us now look at the Psalm itself. The central figure in this Psalm is not David; the Psalm belongs to Him who is the Root and Offspring of David, even our LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself.

And this is true despite the confession of sins we find in the 4th verse. In our former studies of the Messianic Psalms we have seen our LORD so identifying Himself with His people that He confesses their sins as His own. How precious it is to know that He was thus so thoroughly touched with the feeling of our infirmities, that He reckoned our sins as His own, and confessed them as such!

In the first verse of the Psalm we read: **"Blessed is he that considereth the poor"** (Psalm 40:1). The word translated "poor" is singular, and not plural, so that it is not poor people in general that are contemplated here, but rather some one person. The Authorize version's marginal rendering is, "the weak or sick." It is the Son of GOD Himself in His humiliation who here appears as a weak or sick man, and the beatitude is pronounced upon those who consider Him: "Happy he that considereth this weak, sick man." To such a man the promise is that **"the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness"** (vs. 1-3).

The Hebrew word for "make" means to *"turn"* or *"change."* How wonderful it is to think of GOD's turning one's bed and changing it, or making it!

Hear our LORD speaking in the 4th verse: **"I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee."** He knew no sin (II Corinthians 5:21), and in Him was no sin (I John 3:5). That is true. He was ever holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners (Hebrews 7:26). But after all it was on account of our sins that He had come down from Heaven to live among men, and finally to die for them. And in His journey to the Cross He thought of Himself as one of us and He identified Himself with us, and in this sense bore our sins in His own body unto the tree as He finally, in His atoning work on the Cross, bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

In verse 5 He says: **"Mine enemies speak evil of me."**

And what did they say of Him? This is what they said: **"When shall he die, and his name perish?"**

He was sick and weak, and His enemies longed for His death. They wanted to be rid of Him.

And these enemies included His trusted friend, the same one referred to later in verse 9: **"And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it"** (vs. 6).

The mystery of Judas Iscariot is beyond our ken. It is far easier to ask questions about him than to answer them. That our LORD was not deceived in him is perfectly evident, for He said in John 6:70-71, **"Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"** (John 6:70). This word "devil" is never applied in Scripture to any one beside Satan and Judas. Whenever we read of it as applying to an unclean spirit it is always a "demon." Our LORD called Judas a devil. **"He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of**

the twelve" (John 6:71). And again in John 13:18, as we have already seen, He said, "**I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.**"

Judas was never a believer. He was never a saved man. It was Judas Iscariot at the supper at Bethany who complained against the act of Mary in anointing our LORD JESUS. He said: "**Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor**" (John 12:5). But John explains to us that "**This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein**" (John 12:6).

But why did the LORD JESUS trust Judas Iscariot when He knew all the time how crooked he was? That He did trust him is certain, as we shall see in our Psalm; for in the 9th verse He says, "**Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.**" These are the very words quoted in John 13:18 above, and in them He declares that Judas Iscariot was His own familiar friend in whom He trusted.

We may not know the answer to these questions, but we must believe what our LORD says about the matter. He trusted Judas Iscariot, and when Judas Iscariot betrayed Him and joined with others in delivering Him to be crucified, while he and these others were fulfilling GOD's plan and purpose, nevertheless they acted wickedly in so doing: "**Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain**" (Acts 2:23). Judas acted wickedly as a free moral agent, and was held responsible for his sin, and he "**by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place**" (Acts 1:25). Our LORD Himself said: "**The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born**" (Matthew 26:24).

Now returning to our Psalm let us listen to our LORD in words recorded a thousand years before His incarnation, saying, "**But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me. And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever**" (Psalm 41:10-12).

Of course this prayer was answered in His resurrection from the dead, and His exaltation to that place on the right hand of the Majesty on High where He now sits, expecting until the Day when His enemies shall become His footstool, and when He shall be manifested as the righteous Judge of all the earth, as KING of kings, and LORD of lords!

The 13th verse is a doxology to mark the end of the first book in the five books of the Psalter: "**Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.**" Compare Psalm 72:19-20 at the end of Book Two; Psalm 89:52 at the end of Book Three; and Psalm 106:48 at the end of Book Four.

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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